

DOCKET NO: 238395US2RD

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF :
RYUZO OKADA, ET AL. : EXAMINER: SENFI, B
SERIAL NO: 10/607,045 :
FILED: JUNE 27, 2003 : GROUP ART UNIT: 2621
FOR: IMAGE PROCESSING :
APPARATUS AND METHOD :

REQUEST FOR EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22313

SIR:

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner to make an Examiner's amendment to modify Claim 17 as attached for the above noted application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Claim 17 (Currently Amended): An image processing method executed using an image processing apparatus having an obstacle detection computer, comprising:

inputting a plurality of frame images serving as video images;

detecting, using the image processing apparatus and from each frame image in the plurality of frame images, a straight-line component in a horizontal direction in the frame image;

generating an obstacle candidate area as an image area in a vicinity of the detected straight-line component;

tracking the obstacle candidate area in an image succeeding each frame image in the plurality of frame images, and producing a tracking result for the obstacle candidate area;

determining, using the image processing apparatus and using the tracking result of three or more obstacle candidate areas, whether the three or more obstacle candidate areas belong to a plane extending in a specific direction in a three dimensional space, and producing a determination result; and

detecting, using the image processing apparatus, an obstacle based on the determination result.